never seen anything in New Zealand comparable with the energy, care, and unflagging devotion accorded to the Japanese soil, and although I was told that the strain is beginning to tell, that farmers' sons leave home when they can and that an increasing number of eldest sons are defaulting in their duty to marry and stay under their fathers' roofs, the fact remains that every yard of land is producing rice or millet or barley or wheat or vegetables, and sometimes two of these crops simultaneously. You can't starve a nation like that, and it will not, like the people of India, starve itself. It will eat, it will survive and keep healthy, and you cannot doubt, in whatever setting you see them, that starvation so far has not come near the Japanese.

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A COROLLARY to all this of course is that Japan is an uneasy country for New Zealanders, a place without natural rest. No one basks in the sun or loafs or sprawls. I don't remember seeing anyone lying down, or in the open sitting down. They squat or sit on their heels, but only at night can they relax and rest. I did see a student sitting on the ground at the door of a University library: there was a sheltered corner there, with dry grass a foot long, and he sat with crossed legs reading while he waited for the doors to open. But in general there are no free corners to rest in—except in public parks—and you find yourself wondering which is more precious in Japan, time or space. I think space is. Although time is never wasted, it is plant room they value most—a corner for a tree, a ledge for a vegetable, and no place ever to stand and stare. Man is the slave of the earth, or its caretaker: never its possessor. It possesses him.

TWO LOST SHEEP

A farm in Japan is an acre of land, or occasionally two or three acres cultivated to the very door of the cottage in which the farmer, and all his animals, live. Only once did I see an animal grazing, and that was a bullock on a short tether on the bank of a dam. It is also unusual, at least in Southern Japan, to see animals pulling a plough or any kind of farm vehicle. If a farmer has a horse or a bullock he uses them for carting loads to and from the city—especially the most precious load of all, fertiliser for his soil. But he is his own plough-horse; his hoe, grubber, rake, and arms, his outlay in implements. There are of course no fences, and normally no hedges. I saw vineyards, and now and again a lonely fruit-tree, but an enclosed home, with flowers and shrubs, is for the very rich only. Crows, to my surprise, were fairly numerous, but I never saw fowls running at large, or ducks, or geese. And here is the story of my only sheep:

I was advised to go to Kyoto to see the cultural life of Japan and in Kyoto to see, among other places of interest, the Art Gallery, the Museum, and the Zoo. But the Art Gallery was not open: so sorry. The Museum — sorry, no museum just now. Later. So there remained only the Zoo, and this we were determined to see.

We did. We drove through the gates, got out of our car, and began looking round. We found a horse, old and skinny, in one pen, an Irish terrier in a cage strong enough to hold lions, a really savage Alsatian in the bears' den. There was a pit full of monkeys, amorous and obscene, a pen with two or three young pigs, three cages of domestic fowls, a pelican, two or three cranes, and a really dazzling pheasant. Then we came on them—two decrepit sheep, labelled in Latin, English, and Japanese:—Sheep: Corriedale—New Zealand.

It was my most exciting moment in Japan. I remembered Japanese arriving to buy New Zealand sheep, the criticism when any were sold, the head-shakings and solemn warnings. I even spoke to one of the purchasers myself and asked where our New Zealand sheep were going. But we should have turned over and gone to sleep, as we later did. If those are the last two Corriedales in Japan, there will be no others. The ram looked so wanly at his mate and at us, the ewe gave him such a watery look in return, that a lamb would be a miracle. If they are still alive when autumn comes they will have forgotten their multiplication tables. But I would have given a hundred yen to be able to drop a matagowri bush over the rails and two live tussocks.

* * *

SO it went on for ten days, and so I could go on for ten more pages. But I am not writing a book. I am trying to convey to fellow New Zealanders what life in Japan is like *at first*. Those who stay long enough to see through outward appearances will discover no doubt that in their first few weeks they were living in a daze. But it is the first weeks I am writing about. Six thousand New Zealanders will arrive one day at Kure with no more knowledge of the experience ahead of them than strangers who have come to New Zealand with minds full of Maoris and boiling mud. If they think they will be met by geisha girls waving cherry blossoms at them, or bowing so low that the chrysanthemums drop out of their hair, it is common decency to tell them that Kure is not unlike Lyttelton, or not unlike what Lyttelton would be with 50 times as many people and its waterfront battered by bombs. But it is better still to tell them that a geisha is about as interesting to a New Zealander as a performing doll, that Japan as a whole is absorbingly interesting, and that even if it were as dull as ditch-water, no New Zealander who is able to see it can afford not to. New Zealand soldiers are going to Japan because New Zealand is deeply, and even critically, interested in everything that is happening there. We dare not do a second time what we have already done once—play like children on one side of a pond while momentous things are happening on the other side. Japan has not disappeared. It has not been eliminated from our world, but made more obviously a part of it; and the quickest way to learn that lesson is to spend a few months among the Japanese people.

PART OF OUR WORLD

This is the story of a few days among them, with many of the most interesting things left out. I have not described my visit to a brewery, spared by the atomic bomb, and now from the edge of annihilation pouring out thousands of bottles of beer a week at 3½d a bottle; or the recreation centre established by the American command in Kyoto, where any soldier on leave may spend seven days

(continued on next page)

N.Z. Government Official Photograph

"THEY WILL get through everything that defeat has forced them to endure." Telephone linesmen at work restoring communications in Hiroshima.

N.Z. Government Official Photograph

"THE TIMBER situation in Japan seemed surprisingly good." The woman in the foreground, aged 45-50 and about 4ft. 3in. in height, is employed as a labourer carrying heavy railroad sleepers from the stack in the background.